

WANTED: WESTSIDE BIRDS

By Gianna Rendón

Note: In February the city informed the public about plans for the removal of egrets who live in Elmendorf Lake because of claims that they are a threat to military planes on that flight path and that their droppings are also a health hazard—something specialists

You birds.

With your loud noises at all times of the day and night,
and with your poop everywhere,

you had a chance to clean up after yourselves

We sent you warnings,

code compliance notes,

we don't care that you can't read English

only your bird language.

We tolerated you while you were on Bird Island

but then your numbers grew.

You started to spread to other trees

on other parts of Elmendorf Park.

You smelly loud animals,

Don't you know that this park

and this lake and all the islands on it belong to us!

The humans?

.... don't get us wrong,

we love birds.

Just not your kind of bird.

We like small birds,

ones who are quiet and don't fly as high

who don't poop as much or as smelly.

The Birds say, "We Birds have been here for thousands of years.

Our migratory patterns are etched in our DNA.

We are Elmendorf Lake and Elmendorf Lake is us.

We knew the lake before it was renamed,

when you humans merely called it a swamp.

You think you created this lake.

Silly humans.

The fish make the lake,

the opossums,

the turtles,

the trees,

all the insects

the plants and algae,

and yes also you the humans.



disagree with. The discovery of eggs has stopped plans for the removal of the birds at this time. As a lifelong resident of the Elmendorf Lake area, I urge everyone to call City Council and tell them to leave the birds alone! I offer this poem for the egrets.

But us birds too.

We've seen your tourist videos,

the ones where you talk about our lake,

you show us Birds and our songs and our dances,

our feathers flowing in the wind free.

You revamped the lake. Put in 'nicer prettier plants';

to clean up the lake and the algae

and make it more appealing to a new type human

not our friends who come on Sundays after mass or on

birthdays,

but new humans, whiter humans you were trying to lure in here.

The problem is those white humans don't like our songs or our

feathers.

They turn up their noses at us and our natural smell.

You can try to scare us away with your noise and your light machines.

It might take generations,

maybe not us

maybe not our children

or our children's children,

but we will be back.

The gentle waters of the lake

and the sway of the grasses call to us

and lead us home."

The humans say, "There you birds go again with your threats.

We'll build a fence,

a wall, a sky wall to keep you and your children

and your children's children out.

We'll put barbed wire on the trees if we have to,

poison the water so the insects that you eat will die

so you'll starve.

Make Elmendorf Lake great again."

The Birds, "You will miss our songs and our dances.

You will miss our beauty

and the love we bring to this lake.

You may think you are harming us,

but you are only harming yourself."